

Abstract

[0084] Multimedia presentations are multicast using an announcement channel that includes presentation description information along with multiple channels for multiple streams of multimedia data to accommodate clients of different multimedia resources. Clients can use the announcement channel to select channel(s) appropriate for their multimedia resources. The channels are created in a predetermined manner (*e.g.*, preselected logical addresses, preselected ports of an IP address, *etc.*) so that clients can immediately join a channel without (or concurrently with) joining the announcement channel to reduce startup latency. An acceleration channel may be created that provides blocks of data containing a preselected number of previous units, which may be transmitted at a bit rate that is “faster than real-time”. This feature allows clients with suitable resources to more quickly buffer sufficient data to begin presenting the multimedia data to users.